

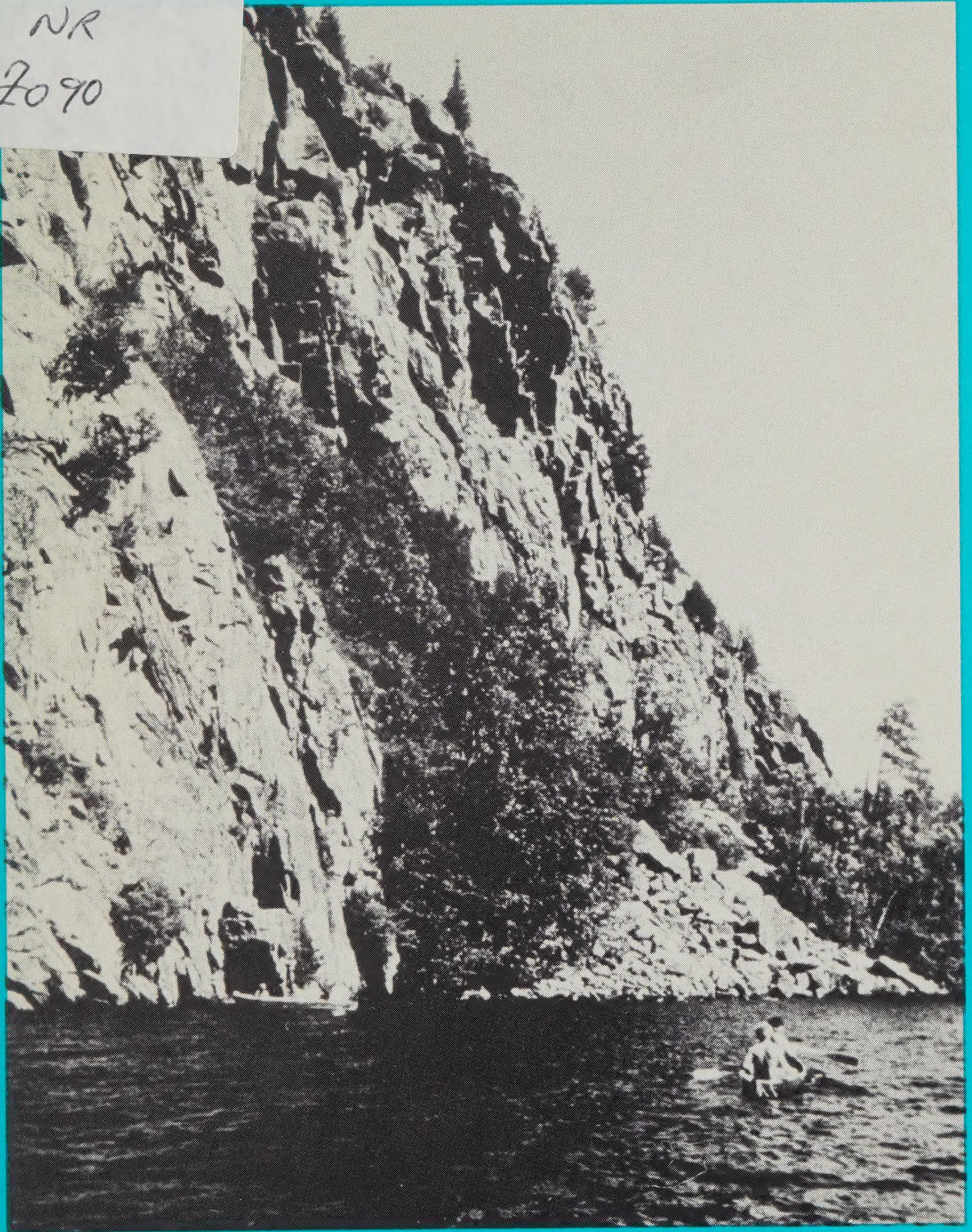
Kishkebus Canoe Trail

Bon Echo
Provincial Park

CA20N

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The Kishkebus - A Day Trip

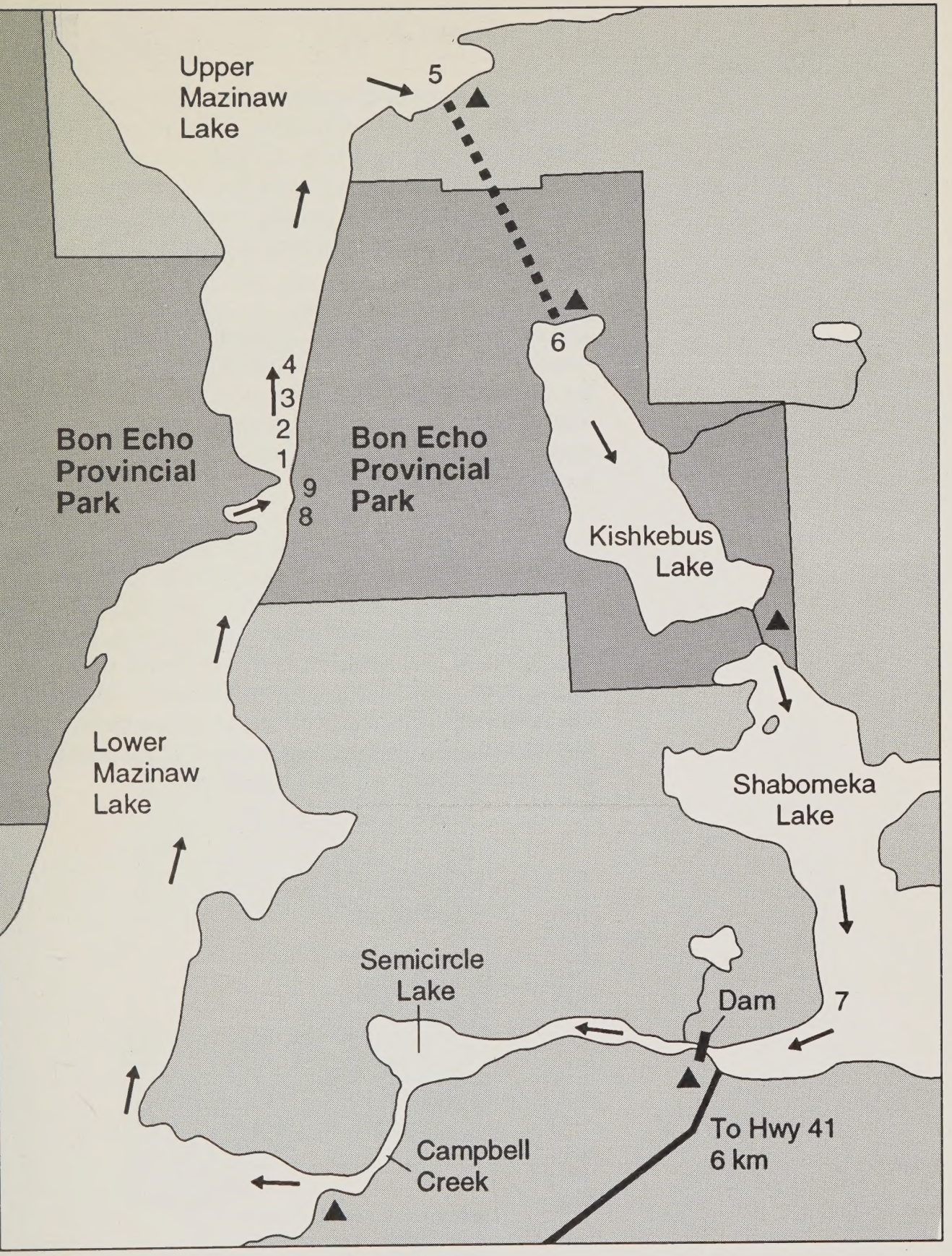
The Kishkebus Canoe Route takes you through 21 km (13 miles) of geological history, past Native rock paintings and among the plants and animals in the eastern part of Bon Echo Provincial Park.

The 6 hour trip includes lakes, streams, 4 portages and (if you choose) the spectacular view from the top of the cliff. Two of the portages are about 60 meters (200 feet) long, one is just a lift over a beaver dam but the "carry" between Mazinaw and Kishkebus Lakes is 1.5 km (1 mile). This long portage is well constructed and maintained, but if you feel it will be too much, travel the southern route to get to Kishkebus Lake - then double back.

The accompanying notes introduce you to the special features along the way. Be sure to pack a lunch and don't forget a field guide, binoculars and a fishing rod.

Points of Interest (Refer to map)

- 1** The Great Rock
- 2** "OLD WALT"
- 3** A Sacred Place
- 4** Ancient Cliff Hangers
- 5** The Long Haul to Kishkebus
- 6** The Dollar-A-Day Loggers
- 7** Shabomeka... To Mazinaw
- 8** A Unique Environment
- 9** View From the Top



Portage ▲

1 Kilometre

North

The focal point of Bon Echo has always been the giant Rock towering over 100 meters (345 feet) above the east side of Mazinaw Lake. It has drawn people for over 2,000 years. Natives, prospectors, artists, and today's tourists have all been awed by the Rock's grandeur.

But how did it get here? To answer this question geologists have looked at the rocks for clues. While these clues can give us a good idea of what happened, the exact story is obscured in the mists of time. One likely explanation follows.

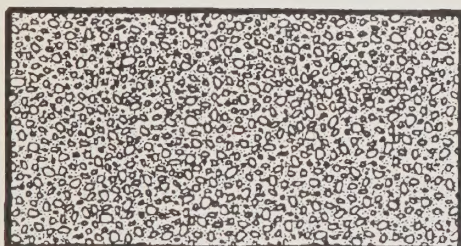
This particular part of the Canadian Shield was formed over one billion years ago deep within a volcanic mountain range. At that time the Bon Echo Rock was a hot mass of liquid rock. As time passed this liquid cooled and hardened into a large, solid lump of granitic rock. Over the hundreds of millions of years since then, the mountains above completely eroded away and uncovered the Bon Echo Rock.

Its Fault...

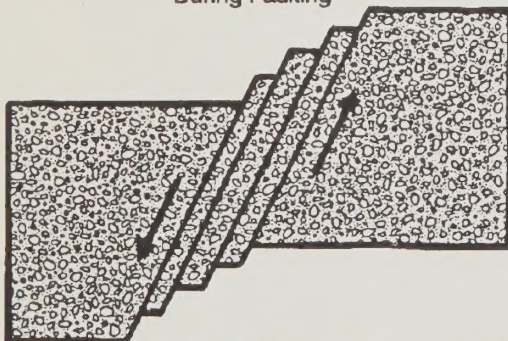
Some time after the Bon Echo Rock solidified, a break or "fault" occurred in the earth's crust that split the Rock in two. The Rock moved along this "fault" creating a zone of crushed and broken rock. This broken rock eroded away more quickly than the main mass of rock, which resulted in the spectacular shear cliff we see today. The cliff is actually even bigger than it looks since almost as much extends below the water as above.

With this impressive geological feature Bon Echo is rated one of Ontario's finest climbing sites. Since this activity is dangerous, only professionally trained and equipped climbers should attempt it. Members of the Alpine Club of Canada can frequently be seen applying their skills on the cliff. Climbers can dislodge loose rock, so avoid areas directly below them!

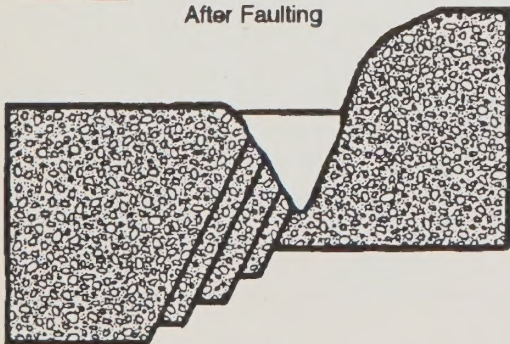
Before Faulting



During Faulting



After Faulting

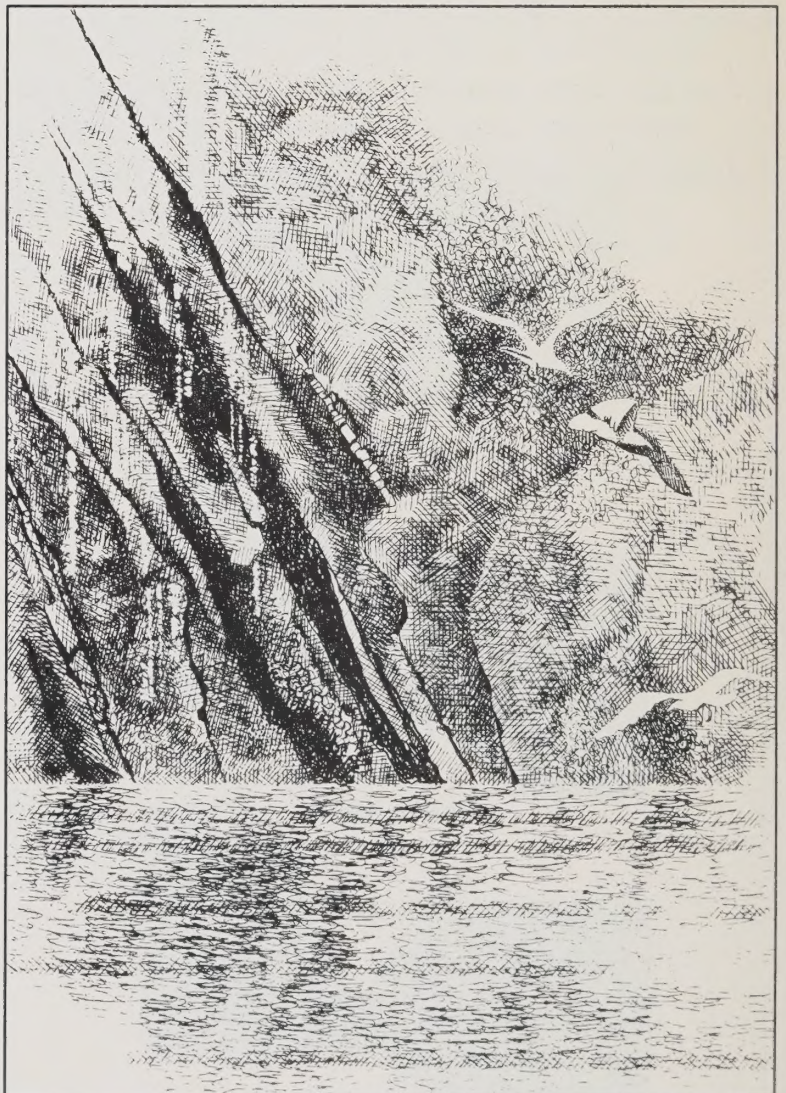


... And Its Patterns

Look up at the Rock. What do you see? Bands of dark rock, deep crevices and white streaks all form patterns on the cliff face.

The dark bands formed after the Rock solidified, when molten rock of a different composition pushed into its cracks (notice how these bands all run the same way). This liquid hardened into dark bands of mafic rock. Being softer than granitic rock, the mafic bands erode faster, forming crevices.

The white streaks result when water seeps through the soil and rock and dissolves out the calcium carbonate in them. As the water runs down the cliff face it evaporates, leaving behind only the white calcium carbonate.



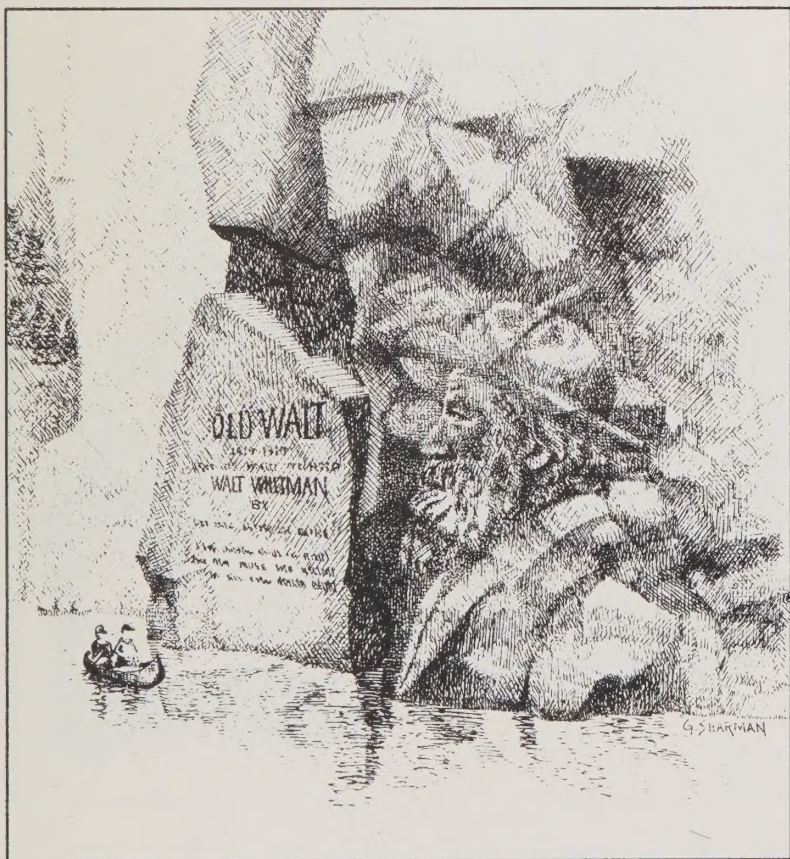
2 "OLD WALT"

Paddle north up Mazinaw Lake along the base of the Rock. Two hundred meters north of the narrows you will see chiselled into the granite face, an "imperishable memorial to the genius" of the American poet, Walt Whitman.

In 1919, Flora MacDonald Denison, once owner of this property and Horace Trauble, Whitman's executor and biographer, dedicated the "Big Rock" to the democratic ideals of Whitman.

Originally Flora wanted a bust of the "Good Grey Poet" carved in the Rock but when costs proved prohibitive she decided on these lines from one of his poems. It took two stone-masons from Aberdeen, Scotland two months to carve the massive inscription.

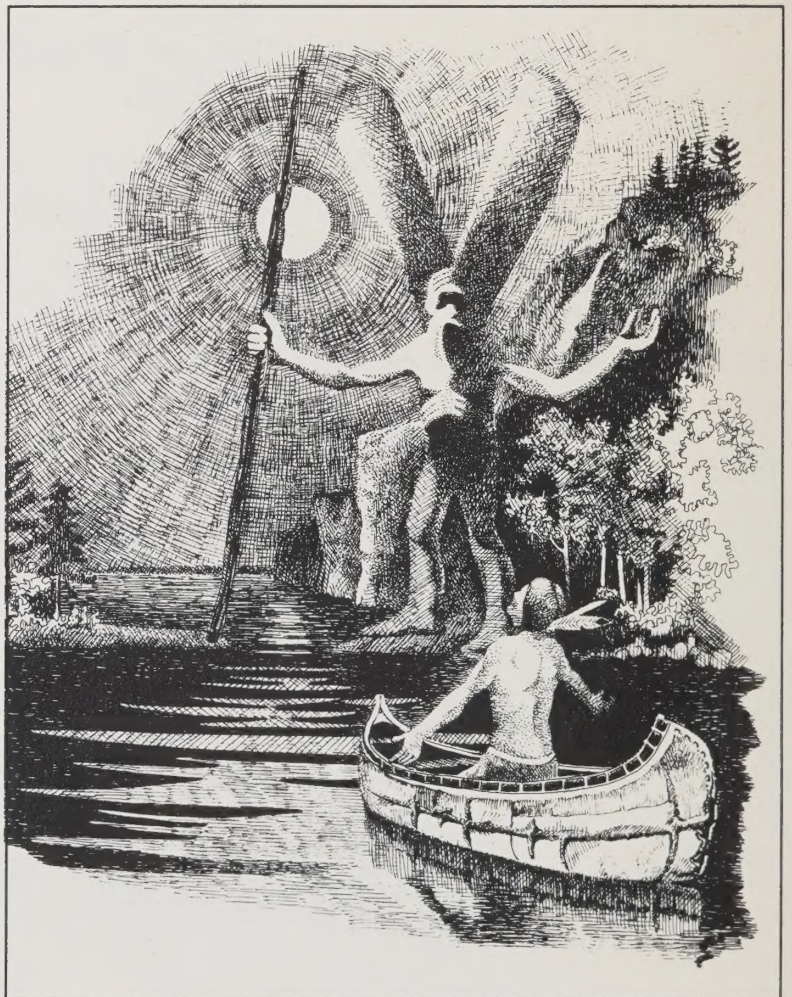
Flora died at Bon Echo in 1921. As she wished, a bronze urn containing her ashes was dropped in the lake near the base of this memorial.



To the Algonkian people, unique, natural formations are the sacred places of spirits. The towering granite cliff above, rising out of the deep waters below, is such a place.

As you proceed along the cliff, watch carefully within one meter of the water line for what appear to be faint red smudges. These are rock paintings or "pictographs". They were created by the Algonkian people 300 - 1000 years ago using a reddish mineral called hematite. According to Algonkian legend, the painters were shamans - medicine men with supernatural powers.

There have been 264 individual paintings found here, making this one of the largest visible collections in North America.



The human-like figure (see illustration) with rays of power emanating from his head is Nanabush. Still identified by the Algonkian people as the “spirit of nature”, he represents courage, generosity and kindness. Look for his image among the paintings on the cliff.

To help preserve the pictographs, do not touch them or allow your craft to rub against them.

4 Ancient Cliff Hangers

As you paddle by the many century old pictographs, you are also canoeing under an ancient forest canopy. There are Eastern White Cedar trees clinging to the cliff that are upwards of 1,000 years old! As a matter of fact, there’s an entire old-growth forest on the cliff face - probably one of the oldest in Eastern North America! But in this case “old” doesn’t mean big. Due to the harsh life on the face of the rock these evergreens have developed into twisted, gnarled dwarfs no bigger than a Christmas tree. Look for these amazing, ancient bonsai trees all along the Rock’s vertical research laboratory.

The Long Haul To Kishkebus 5

As you round the north end of the cliff into German Bay watch for the triangular portage sign by the dock. The cabin up on the right belongs to the Alpine Club of Canada. You are passing over private property so please be considerate.

This portage is 1.5 km (nearly 1 mile). As you ascend the trail toward Kishkebus Lake take a rest (or 2 or 3...) and note the wide variety of bird and plant life.

Also known as Dire Lake, Kishkebus is in the park's protected nature reserve zone. This canoe route is the only development allowed in the area. Motorboats, camping and fires are all prohibited. You may however picnic along the way, or try your luck fishing for lake trout or bass.



6 The Dollar-A-Day Loggers

Back in the early forties there was a logging camp located just northeast of Kishkebus Lake. The logs were skidded to the lake and floated in booms to a mill at the south end of Mazinaw Lake.

Fifteen men worked long hours here for a dollar a day. Lodging was free but somewhat primitive. The uninsulated bunkhouse had crude frame beds, with mattresses made of hay. It was a dangerous occupation and all too often men lost their lives.

On some of the ridges and slopes surrounding Kishkebus there are stands of very old trees which survived both fire and logging, probably due to their inaccessibility. They represent the size of the trees that once covered this part of Ontario.



Shabomeka means “cranberry” in Ojibway. Also known as Buck Lake, much of its shoreline is privately owned. You are now outside the Park boundary and there is little opportunity to stop and picnic. Whitefish, bass and lake trout fishing is good in these waters.

Along Campbell Creek through Semicircle (Horseshoe) Lake and into Mazinaw, the shoreline is mainly marsh - rich in plant and wildlife. Bass is the main sport fish.

Watch for the carnivorous Pitcher Plant along the north shore. Its distinctive pitcher-like leaves entrap and digest unwary insects. In the water you will see long thin strands of Eel Grass, and along the shoreline one of the most prolific plants is the giant Royal Fern.

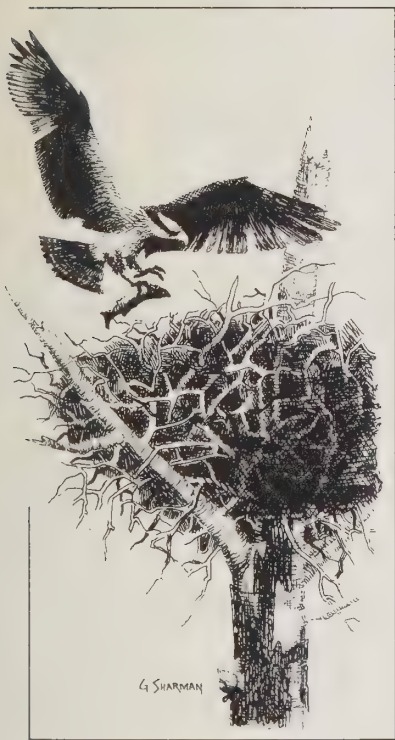
Yellowthroats often flit among low shrubs, while Kingbirds angle upward like “harrier jets” to intercept insects. You may also see Turkey Vultures circling on powerful wings spanning two meters. Taking advantage of rising warm air currents, their flight seems effortless. With their two-toned blackish wings held above their bodies in a shallow V-shape, there is no mistaking their identity. The Turkey Vulture is a carrion feeder. It’s distinctive red head is featherless and it has acute senses of smell and sight. These adaptations serve them well in their role as part of nature’s recycling crew.



Another high glider sometimes observed is the Osprey. This rarely sighted bird is a master fisherman, divebombing from considerable heights and grasping its prey in powerful talons.

Keep a watchful eye for other interesting marsh dwellers as well. Snapping turtles, water snakes, beaver and even otter frequent these shores.

As you re-enter Mazinaw Lake, watch for bass and pike among the plants near shore. The deeper waters of Mazinaw support such fish species as pickerel, trout and, some say - the "Mazinaw Monster".



Paddling up the east side of lower Mazinaw Lake on the last leg of your trip, you will come to a dock where the Cliff Top Trail begins. A steep climb up metal stairs leads to a wood chipped trail and five observation decks along the way to the top of the Rock. The breath-taking panoramic view of the surrounding landscape make the 2 km (about 1 mile) round-trip walk well worth the effort!

The top of the rock is a unique and fragile environment so please stay on the trail and viewing platforms. The highest points are open meadows spotted with rock-hugging junipers and scrub oak. Here the trees never reach full height due to the thin dry soil.

For the provincially “rare” Prairie Warbler, these conditions represent a perfect nesting location. This misnamed yellowish bird normally breeds in eastern United States and only a few other places in Ontario.

During the spring and summer listen for its unmistakable song - a series of five to 16 or more notes rising up a scale. They sound like: “zee, zee, zee, zee,...zeet!”

9 View From The Top

Looking out from the uppermost viewing platform, the horizon indicates the park's western limits , where Joeperry Lake drains into the Skootamatta River system and then into Lake Ontario, via the Moira River.

Below you, Mazinaw Lake drains south into the Mississippi River and then into the Ottawa. Thus you are looking across the top of two major eastern Ontario watersheds.



Journey's End

Your travels have taken you past images representing the dreams of former visitors and culminates on top of the Rock, the inspiration for the dreams and a great place for dreaming. You've experienced the solitude of the park's wilderness and you've seen some of the inhabitants that call it home. The park's Southern Canadian Shield location is the reason for the landscape, foresighted people are the reason we have it to enjoy today. We hope you had a pleasant journey!

Notes



Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of three horizontal dotted lines on a cream-colored background.

The Friends of Bon Echo Park is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to assisting Bon Echo Provincial Park in achieving their goals for the protection of park resources and in furthering educational programs and projects.

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